



PRESS RELEASE

# Baker-Polito Administration Supports Local Food Ventures

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

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**BOSTON** — The Baker-Polito Administration today announced the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) has awarded \$799,794 to three groups through the Massachusetts Food Ventures Program (MFVP), a grant program that addresses food access and encourages new food ventures that create additional economic opportunity. The announcement follows an [award](#) of over \$700,000 to four agricultural groups in September.

“Our administration is pleased to continue supporting new agricultural enterprises that create economic growth and provide opportunities for jobs and new businesses in the Commonwealth’s growing agriculture and food industries,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “We look forward to continuing our support of Massachusetts agriculture and building upon the success of these ventures since the program first began a few years ago.”

“Access to locally grown and produced food is crucial to families and communities around the Commonwealth,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. “The funding awarded through the Massachusetts Food Ventures Program will enable community-based organizations to continue their mission to provide healthy, nutritious food to individuals across our state – regardless of income.”

The MFVP was first funded by the Baker-Polito Administration in the 2017 Capital Plan and provides financial support to food ventures sited primarily in or near communities of low- or moderate-income, including Gateway Cities and rural communities. With expanded investment, completed projects will improve access to Massachusetts-grown, harvested or caught food products through the development of collaborations with local agricultural enterprises and private/public entities. The program also helps implement the goals of the [Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan](#).

“The Massachusetts Food Ventures Program ensures widespread access to food choices and availability to Commonwealth residents, particularly in low- or moderate-income communities,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. “By awarding these grants, the Baker-Polito Administration continues its commitment to encourage job creation and entrepreneurship, while greatly improving post-harvest opportunities for farmers.”

Funded projects include new construction that will create temporary and full time employment, as well as create food-based facilities that will foster job creation and expansion of food access and distribution in low to moderate income areas.

“We have already witnessed the results from investing in infrastructure for local food production, in the first year of this new grant program,” **said MDAR Commissioner John Lebeaux**. “Through the support of the Massachusetts Food Ventures Program, local agricultural enterprises thrive and underserved communities continue to have access to nutritious Massachusetts-grown products.”

Key areas for investment for the MFVP are food processing infrastructure to meet the needs of the expanding local food system; improved distribution systems to support opportunities for equitable access to fresh local food; and retail outlet strategies that enhance access to healthy food.

The following groups received grants:

**Daily Table, Dorchester - \$290,285**

This grant will enable Daily Table to purchase materials and equipment for the final phase of construction for the second location of a not-for profit food retail outlet. This market will provide healthy prepared meals, food access, create new job and training opportunities.

### **Community Servings, Jamaica Plain - \$391,296**

This grant will allow Community Servings to purchase an emergency back-up generator, four refrigerated delivery vans and specialized industrial kitchen equipment. This investment will support the region's only provider of medically tailored meals to low-income individuals state-wide, create jobs and procure produce from local farmers.

### **Franklin County Community Development Corporation, Greenfield - \$118,213**

This grant will support Franklin County CDC's purchase of specialized food processing equipment which will expand the capacity of the Western MA Food Processing Center.

"Like myself, the Baker-Polito Administration recognizes the importance of creating partnerships between local farmers and urban communities. The Massachusetts Food Ventures Program will allow for expansion and increased access to Massachusetts-grown food and products," **said State Senator Linda Dorcena Forry (D-Dorchester)**. "One awardee, the Daily Table, is an important retail store that provides healthy options at prices everyone can afford; they now will be able to open a second location in Roxbury."

"I am elated that Community Servings is a Local Food Ventures grantee," **said State Representative Liz Malia (D-Jamaica Plain)**. "This money will support Community Servings, so that they can serve more patients through culturally appropriate, medically tailored, home-delivered meals and nutrition education, while also providing CORI-friendly jobs in under-served communities throughout Massachusetts."

"I want to thank the Baker-Polito Administration For their leadership in addressing the important issues of food access and food security," **said State Representative Dan Hunt (D-Boston)**. "Innovative programs like Massachusetts Food Ventures connect the dots between rural production and urban consumption, and are a big part of the effort to make our local food system resilient and inclusive."

MDAR's goals have been to increase and sustain the capacity of local food producers and enterprises to provide tangible, measurable benefits to residents in low-moderate income communities which include: increased access to healthy fresh food, entrepreneurial opportunities, economic enhancement, and increased access to Massachusetts produced foods.

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The Department's mission is to help keep the Massachusetts' food supply safe and secure, and to work to keep Massachusetts agriculture economically and environmentally sound.

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